

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior version, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 21 canceled.

22. (amended) The ~~system of Claim 11~~ method of claim 23 wherein the ~~thrask-list module~~ first viewing pane further displays in proximity of ~~a thrask~~ each titled data item an indicator representing an approaching deadline.

23. (new) A method for managing information items within a message-based system having a viewer, the method comprising the operations of:

displaying a first viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system; the first viewing pane showing a plurality of titled data items; each titled data item representing a collection of information items associated with the titled data item; at least one titled data item including a message as one of the information items in the collection; the first viewing pane further showing, for each titled data item, a visual indication that the titled data item includes a message having a message status of unopened as one of the information items associated with the titled data item;

receiving a first selection signal from a user selecting one of the titled data items displayed in the first viewing pane;

displaying a plurality of information data items in a second viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system; each information data item indicating one of the information items associated with the titled data item selected by the user; one of the plurality of information data items indicating the message having the message status of unopened; and

displaying at least some of the contents of the message having the message status of unopened in a third viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system.

24. (new) The method of claim 23 further comprising the operation of updating the message status of the message selected by the user from unopened to opened, and, when the collection of information items represented by the titled data item selected by the user no longer includes a message having a message status of unopened, modifying the visual indication for the titled data item in the first viewing pane to show that the titled data item includes no unopened messages.

25. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein the plurality of titled data items displayed in the first viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system are displayed in a list in a default order by title name; and

wherein the method further comprises the operations of

receiving a user signal indicating a movement selection; the user signal further indicating a selected titled data item from the list of titled data items and a destination location;

reordering the list of the titled data items to show the selected titled data item in the destination location in the list of titled data items; and

adding a visual indication adjacent to the selected titled data item in the first viewing pane showing that the selected titled data item is displayed in a fixed location in the list of titled data items and not in the default order.

26. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein the first viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system further shows, for each of the titled data items displayed,

a sender name data item indicating a name of a sender of a received message included as one of the information items in the collection represented by the titled data item; the received message being the most recently received message in the collection of information items; and

a date data item indicating a sending date of the most recently received message.

27. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein the collection of information items associated with each titled data item includes a plurality of information types comprising messages, documents, reference URLs each indicating a web page in the World Wide Web, and user-defined text; and

wherein the second viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system further shows, for each of the information data items displayed,

a visual indication uniquely showing the information type of the information data item; and

a subject data item indicating a subject of the information data item.

28. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein at least one of the information items in the collection represented by the titled data item has a task deadline associated with the information item; and

wherein the first viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system further shows, for each of the titled data items displayed,

a visual indication showing a pre-defined time period, and further showing where a nearest upcoming task deadline occurs in the pre-defined time period relative to a current viewing time; the nearest upcoming task deadline being determined from all task deadlines associated with all information items in the collection represented by the titled data item such that a user viewing the visual indications showing the pre-defined time period associated with the plurality of titled data items displayed in the first viewing pane can determine which titled data item has the nearest upcoming deadline relative to the current viewing time.

29. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein the visual indication showing a pre-defined time period comprises an elongated rectangle representing the pre-defined time period; the elongated rectangle including two fill colors; a first fill color showing a portion of the pre-defined time period occurring before the nearest upcoming task deadline, relative to the current viewing time, and a second fill color showing a portion of

the pre-defined time period occurring after the nearest upcoming task deadline, relative to the current viewing time, such that a user viewing all of the elongated rectangles associated with the plurality of titled data items displayed in the first viewing pane can determine the nearest upcoming deadline as being associated with the titled data item having the elongated rectangle showing the largest portion of the second fill color.

30. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein the first viewing pane further displays in proximity of each titled data item an indicator representing a count of associated action items included in the information items represented by the titled data item.

31. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein each of the plurality of titled data items displayed in the first viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system has an associated visual indicator showing a count of associated action items included in the information items represented by the titled data item; and

wherein the method further comprises the operations of

receiving an action assignment signal from a user indicating that the message selected by the user from the plurality of information data items in the second viewing pane has a newly-designated associated action item;

displaying in the second viewing pane a visual indication showing that the message has the associated action item; and

modifying the associated visual indicator displayed in the first viewing pane showing the count of associated action items included in the information items represented by the titled data item to include the newly-designated associated action item.

32. (new) The method of claim 23 further comprising the operation of moving one of the information items displayed in the second viewing pane from the collection of information items associated with a first titled data item displayed in the first viewing

pane to the collection of information items associated with a second titled data item displayed in the first viewing pane in response to a signal received from the user.

33. (new) The method of claim 23 further comprising the operation of moving one of the information items displayed in the second viewing pane from the collection of information items associated with the titled data item displayed in the first viewing pane to a newly-created collection of information items associated with a new titled data item in response to a signal received from the user; the first viewing pane showing the new titled data item.

34. (new) The method of claim 23 further comprising the operation of moving all of the information items associated with a first titled data item displayed in the first viewing pane to the collection of information items associated with a second titled data item displayed in the first viewing pane in response to a signal received from the user; the first viewing pane no longer showing the first titled data item.

35. (new) The method of claim 23 further comprising the operation of adding a selected information item to the collection of information items associated with a first titled data item displayed in the first viewing pane in response to a signal received from the user; the selected information item being selected from a data source other than the information items included in the message-based system.

36. (new) The method of claim 23 further comprising the operation of automatically relating the message having the message status of unopened to a plurality of other messages forming a first message thread in the collection of information items associated with the titled data item selected by the user in the first viewing pane; the message being automatically related to one of the plurality of other messages by a common data item including at least one of message sender, message recipient, message subject, and message identification information.

37. (new) The method of claim 36 further comprising the operations of
in response to a signal received from the user, moving a selected message in the first message thread from the collection of information items associated with the titled data item selected by the user in the first viewing pane to a second collection of information items associated with a second titled data item displayed in the first viewing pane; and

when a subsequent message determined to be related to the selected message is received, forming a first message thread in the second collection of information items associated with a second titled data item; the first message thread in the second collection including the selected message and the subsequent message.

38. (new) A method for managing information items within a message-based system having a viewer, the method comprising the operations of:

receiving a message; the message including at least one of an attached document and a reference URL indicating a web page in the World Wide Web;

associating the message and the at least one of the attached document and the reference URL with one of a plurality of collections of information items;

displaying a first viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system; the first viewing pane showing a list of titled data items; each titled data item representing one of the collections of information items; at least one titled data item including the message as one of the information items in the collection;

receiving a first selection signal from a user selecting, from the list of titled data items displayed in the first viewing pane, the titled data item including the message;

displaying a plurality of information data items in a second viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system; each information data item indicating one of the information items associated with the titled data item selected by the user; the second viewing pane showing the message and the at least one of the attached document and the reference URL as separate and selectable information data items;

receiving a second selection signal from a user selecting the at least one of the attached document and the reference URL from the list of information items displayed in the second viewing pane; and

displaying at least some of the contents of the at least one of the attached document and the web page in the World Wide Web indicated by the reference URL in a third viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system; the user being able to display at least some of the contents of the at least one of the attached document and the web page in the World Wide Web indicated by the reference URL without opening or displaying the message.

39. (new) The method of claim 38 wherein the second viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system further shows, for each of the information data items displayed, a visual indication uniquely showing whether the information data item is a message, an attached document, or a reference URL.

40. (new) The method of claim 38 wherein each information item associated with the titled data item selected by the user has an associated deadline property indicating a due date for a task assigned to the information item; and wherein the second viewing pane within the viewer of the message-based system further shows the due date for each of the message, the attached document, and the reference URL.